



# NEWS RELEASE

## MAINE DISTRICT OFFICE

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### MAINE SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTERS COUNSELORS RECOGNIZED BY SBA AS MAINE'S 2006 MINORITY SMALL BUSINESS CHAMPIONS

Augusta, Maine -- The business counselors at the Maine Small Business Development Centers (Maine SBDC)/Small Business & Technology Development Centers (Maine SBTDC) are the recipients of the U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA) Minority Small Business Champion(s) Award for 2006. Kathleen Roberts, Executive Director, Office of Campus Diversity and Equity at the University of Southern Maine, nominated the counselors for the award.

In 2005 minority entrepreneurs generated more than \$1 million in capital formation as a result of assistance from Maine SBDC/SBTDC counselors. "Maine's Small Business Development Centers counselors are among the most valuable resources a business can have," said SBA New England Regional Administrator Charles E. Summers. "Each year this group serves an ever-increasing number of Maine's growing minority population."

More than 125 minority entrepreneurs received counseling services from Maine SBDC/SBTDC counselors in 2005; many more attended training events. This resulted in seven minority-owned businesses being started, nineteen jobs created, and fifteen additional jobs retained.

Maine SBDC/SBTDC business counselors provide business technical assistance, training and resource linkages to Maine's entrepreneurs. Counselor expertise includes business feasibility, business plan development, capital acquisition, financial management, marketing and sales, e-commerce and small business strategic planning.

Like many SBDC clients, minority clients are quick to express their appreciation of Maine SBDC services. "As a result of the counseling I received, I was able to obtain funding for a start-up," said one client on a recent Maine SBDC survey. "Our SBDC counselor is a brilliant person," reported another client. "His knowledge of small business is only overshadowed by his level of courtesy, professionalism and approachability."

The New England Professional Development Committee, the SBDC counselor certifying authority, requires intensive multicultural core-competency instruction for all SBDC business counselors. According to State Director for the Maine SBDC/SBTDC John

Massaia, “The importance of this multi-cultural competency is also reinforced throughout the year at various Maine SBDC/SBTDC meetings and training sessions.”

The Maine SBDC/SBTDC counselors will be honored at the SBA celebration dinner on May 24<sup>th</sup> at Spectacular Event Center in Bangor. For further information on the award recipients or celebration, please contact Bonnie Erickson at the Maine District Office at 622-8275 or [bonnie.erickson@sba.gov](mailto:bonnie.erickson@sba.gov).